

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-5. (Canceled)

6. (Withdrawn—Previously presented) The blade assembly of claim 44, wherein said blade holder has a clip that is attached to said blade.

7. (Withdrawn— Previously presented) The blade assembly of claim 44, wherein said blade can pivot relative to said blade holder.

8. (Withdrawn— Previously presented) The blade assembly of claim 44, wherein said blade holder has a cavity.

9-13. (Canceled)

14. (Withdrawn— Previously presented) The blade assembly of claim 44, wherein said blade holder has an outer groove.

15-36. (Canceled)

37. (Withdrawn— Previously presented) The blade assembly of claim 60, wherein said blade holder has a cavity.

38. (Withdrawn) A blade assembly that can be assembled into a medical device used to cut a cornea, comprising:

a blade that has a cutting edge, a rear edge, and a pair of side edges that extend between said cutting edge and said rear edge, each side edge having a notch; and,

a blade holder that has a pair of clips that are attached to said blade at said blade notches.

39. (Withdrawn) The blade assembly of claim 38, wherein said blade holder can move relative to said blade.

40. (Withdrawn) The blade assembly of claim 38, wherein said blade holder is attached to said blade by a frictional fit.

41-43. (Canceled)

44. (Currently amended) A blade assembly that can be loaded into an inner cavity of a microkeratome, the blade assembly comprising:

a blade disposed in a blade plane, the blade including a front cutting edge, a rear edge opposite the front cutting edge and disposed at a distance from the front cutting edge along a first

direction, a first side edge, and a second side edge disposed at a distance from the first side edge along a second direction, the first direction and the second direction lying in the blade plane; and

a blade holder including a blade holder reference surface generally facing toward the front cutting edge, and an opening configured to receive a pin of the microkeratome, the blade holder frictionally engaging the rear edge and movable relative to the rear edge toward the front cutting edge by an amount adjustable along the first direction, wherein the blade holder reference surface is positioned at an adjustable distance from the front cutting edge along the first direction.

45. (Previously presented) The blade assembly of claim 44, wherein the rear edge includes a notch and the blade holder engages the notch.

46. (Previously presented) The blade assembly of claim 45, wherein the notch includes a first inside edge, a second inside edge facing the first inside edge, and a third inside edge interposed between the first inside edge and the second inside edge, and the blade holder frictionally engages the first inside edge and the second inside edge.

47. (Previously presented) The blade assembly of claim 45, wherein the blade holder has an outer groove and the outer groove engages the notch.

48. (Currently amended) The blade assembly of claim 47, wherein the blade includes a finger extending outwardly from the notch in a direction away from the front cutting edge, the blade holder includes a slot extending from the outer groove, and the finger extends into the slot.

49. (Previously presented) The blade assembly of claim 44, wherein the blade holder has an outer groove and the outer groove engages the rear edge.

50. (Currently amended) The blade assembly of claim 49, wherein the blade includes a finger extending outwardly from the rear edge in a direction away from the front cutting edge, the blade holder includes a slot extending from the outer groove, and the finger extends into the slot.

51. (Currently amended) The blade assembly of claim 44, wherein the blade includes a finger extending outwardly from the rear edge in a direction away from the front cutting edge, the blade holder includes a slot, and the finger extends into the slot.

52. (Currently amended) The blade assembly of claim 44, wherein the blade includes a plurality of fingers extending outwardly from the rear edge in a direction away from the front cutting edge, the blade holder includes a plurality of slots, and the fingers extend respectively into the slots.

53. (Previously presented) The blade assembly of claim 44, wherein the first side edge includes a first notch and the second side edge includes a second notch.

54. (Previously presented) The blade assembly of claim 44, wherein the blade holder includes a tapered top surface and the opening is formed in the tapered top surface.

55. (Currently amended) A blade assembly that can be loaded into an inner cavity of a microkeratome, the inner cavity including an inner cavity reference surface, the blade assembly comprising:

a blade disposed in a blade plane, the blade including a front cutting edge, a rear edge opposing the front cutting edge and disposed at a distance from the front cutting edge along a first direction, a first side edge, and a second side edge disposed at a distance from the first side edge along a second direction, the first direction and the second direction lying in the blade plane; and

a blade holder including a front side generally facing toward the front cutting edge and an opening configured to receive a pin of the microkeratome, the front side including a blade holder reference surface, the blade holder being pressed into frictional engagement with the rear edge by an amount adjustable along the first direction toward the front cutting edge, wherein the blade holder reference surface is positioned at an adjustable distance from the cutting edge along the first direction, and the blade holder reference surface is configured to contact the inner cavity reference surface when the blade assembly is loaded in the inner cavity.

56. (Previously presented) The blade assembly of claim 55, wherein the rear edge includes a notch and the front side engages the notch.

57. (Previously presented) The blade assembly of claim 56, wherein the notch includes a first inside edge, a second inside edge facing the first inside edge, and a third inside edge interposed between the first inside edge and the second inside edge, and the blade holder frictionally engages the first inside edge and the second inside edge.

58. (Currently amended) The blade assembly of claim 55, wherein the blade includes a finger extending outwardly from the rear edge in a direction away from the front cutting edge, the blade holder includes a slot, and the finger extends into the slot.

59. (Currently amended) The blade assembly of claim 55, wherein the blade includes a plurality of fingers extending outwardly from the rear edge in a direction opposite and away from the front cutting edge, the blade holder includes a plurality of slots, and the fingers extend respectively into the slots.

60. (Currently amended) A blade assembly that can be loaded into an inner cavity of a microkeratome, the blade assembly comprising:

a blade disposed in a blade plane, the blade including a front cutting edge, a rear edge opposing the front cutting edge, a first side edge, a second side edge opposing the first side edge,

and a finger extending outwardly from the rear edge in a direction opposite and away from the front cutting edge and generally coplanar with the blade plane; and

a blade holder including a slot, and an opening configured to receive a pin of the microkeratome, wherein the blade holder contacts the rear edge and the finger extends into the slot along the blade plane.

61. (Previously presented) The blade assembly of claim 60, wherein the rear edge includes a notch, the blade holder contacts the notch, and the finger extends from the notch.

62. (Previously presented) The blade assembly of claim 60, wherein the finger frictionally engages the slot.

63. (Previously presented) The blade assembly of claim 60, wherein the finger has an area, a thickness perpendicular to the area, and a finger edge extending along the direction of the thickness, and the finger edge frictionally engages the slot.

64. (Canceled)

65. (Currently amended) The blade assembly of claim 60, wherein the finger is one of a plurality of fingers extending outwardly from the rear edge in a direction opposite and away from the front cutting edge, the slot is one of a plurality of slots of the blade holder, and the fingers extend respectively into the slots.

66. (Previously presented) The blade assembly of claim 60, wherein the blade holder frictionally engages the blade.

67. (Currently amended) The blade assembly of claim 60, wherein the rear edge is disposed at a distance from the front cutting edge along a first direction, the second side edge is disposed at a distance from the first side edge along a second direction, the blade holder includes a blade holder reference surface generally facing toward the front cutting edge, the blade holder is movably engaged with the blade by an amount adjustable along the first direction toward the front cutting edge, and the blade holder reference surface is positioned at an adjustable distance from the front cutting edge along the first direction.

68. (Previously presented) The blade assembly of claim 60, wherein the first side edge includes a first notch and the second side edge includes a second notch.

69. (Previously presented) The blade assembly of claim 60, wherein the blade holder includes a tapered top surface and the opening is formed in the tapered top surface.